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Emotional testimony rivets the nation

"I am no one's pawn."

Michael Reynolds / Associated Press

"This has destroyed my family."

Matt McClain / AFP/Getty Images

HOUSTON: Residents captivated, divided over allegations, process of spectacle in Senate

By Samantha Ketterer and Olivia P. Tallet
STAFF WRITERS

Across Houston and a deeply divided nation, Americans sat glued to their televisions, phones and computers Thursday, mesmerized by the spectacle of a California psychologist facing off against the Supreme Court nominee she has accused of sexually assaulting her.

Regardless of their politics, whether from home, work, school or bars, they watched the emotional drama unfold in the Senate Judiciary Committee with testimony by Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and his accuser, Christine Blasey Ford.

Some voiced their outrage toward one side or the other; some shared their tears over Twitter.

At the University of Houston Law Center, third-year student Kristen Anderson milled around the common area, joining several students watching the testimony.

Reaction continues on A10

Cruz, Cornyn

» Texas' two Republican senators refrain from asking questions. **Page A11**

TV response

» Assault victims call in to C-SPAN, while a Fox News host praises Ford's testimony. **Page A11**

Quotes

» Reacions vary to Ford's and Kavanaugh's testimony. **Page A10**

Kavanaugh, accuser square off with his nomination in balance

By Sheryl Gay Stolberg and Nicholas Fandos
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON – Judge Brett Kavanaugh and his accuser faced off Thursday in an extraordinary, emotional day of testimony that ricocheted from a woman's tremulous account of sexual assault to a man's angry, outraged denial, all of which played out for hours before a riveted nation and a riven Senate.

The two very different versions of the truth, unfolding in the heated atmosphere of gender divides, #MeToo and the Trump presidency, could not be reconciled. The testimony skittered from cringeworthy sexual details to accusations and denials of drunken debauchery to one juvenile exchange over flatulence.

Washington has not seen anything like it in a generation. For people not used to watching gov-

Court continues on A10

Surge pushes state voter registration to record

Texans have become more engaged in election process for variety of reasons

By Jeremy Wallace and Brooke A. Lewis
AUSTIN BUREAU

Texas' voter rolls have jumped by 1.6 million to a record 15.6 million people since the 2014 midterm election, including huge gains in Houston and its suburbs.

Nearly 400,000 people have registered to vote since March, nearly quadruple the number that registers in a typical year, according to election records from 2002 to 2014.

"We are seeing Texans become more engaged, which is very healthy for the future of our state," Secretary of State Rolando Pablos said.

The surge comes as Texas watches the hottest U.S. Senate race in the country between U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz and Democratic Rep. Beto O'Rourke, as well as a half-dozen close races that could determine control of the U.S. House, including the 22nd Congressional District race that includes most of Fort Bend County.

"Competitive elections increase voter interest," University of Houston political scientist Brandon Rottinghaus said.

Over the past six months,

Voters continues on A13

BY THE NUMBERS

Voter registration in Texas for midterm elections over the last 20 years:

2018 - 15.6 million
2014 - 14.0 million
2010 - 13.2 million
2006 - 13.1 million
2002 - 12.6 million
1998 - 11.5 million

Source: Texas Secretary of State

HISD official vows to fix mistakes with bus system

By Jacob Carpenter
STAFF WRITER

Houston ISD's top administrator responsible for overseeing transportation acknowledged this week that multiple mistakes under his leadership have contributed to widespread busing issues in the district, causing thousands of students to miss class time and arrive home later than expected during the first month of school.

In an hourlong interview, HISD Chief Operating Officer Brian Busby said the district's poorly executed overhaul of its transportation routing system has been afflicted by cascading errors in recent months, ranging from ineffective planning to poor communication to technological glitches. Busby, who oversees several departments that employ about 7,000 people, pledged a "back-to-basics" approach to rectifying lingering busing complaints,

Buses continues on A13

After getting on the wrong bus, Henry makes his way to another bus at a magnet school bus hub location in Houston.

Elizabeth Conley / Staff photographer

CITY | STATE

No investigation

The Texas Senate is not investigating a sexual harassment complaint against state Sen. Charles Schwertner, R-Georgetown, though it has the ability to do so. **PAGE A3**

TO OUR READERS

Chronicle comics

Today's Houston Chronicle comics section, including the puzzles, horoscopes and other features, can be found inside the Preview section.

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